United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Vale District Office
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Vale, OR 97918

IN REPLY REFER TO:
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FEB 1 2 2013

Dear Interested Public:

NOTICE OF FIELD MANAGER'S FINAL DECISION
HOLLOWAY FIRE NORTH

BACKGROUND

During the summer of 2012, several lightning caused fires burned within the Jordan Resource Area, Vale District, Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Holloway Fire was one such fire. It ignited on August 5, 2012 and was contained on August 25, 2012. The fire burned 460,811 acres in three BLM Districts (Winnemucca, Burns, and Vale)(See Maps 1 & 2). It burned 164,870 acres of land administered by the BLM and 5,489 acres of private land, or a total of 170,359 acres within the Vale District. The portion of the Holloway Fire that burned in the Vale District BLM is referred to as the Holloway Fire North. It burned in the extreme southwest corner of the Vale District on the Trout Creek and Oregon Canyon Mountains. The burn is located approximately 20 miles west of McDermitt, Nevada. An Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&R) plan was completed for the entire burn. However, this decision will affect only those lands within the Vale District and also serves as the revised ES&R Plan.

The burned area has 76 miles of streams (Map 7) which are occupied by Lahontan Cutthroat trout, a Federally-listed threatened species. The area is currently occupied by Greater Sage-Grouse and is key habitat. Contained within the burned area perimeter are 164,288 acres of Preliminary Priority Habitat (PPH) and 6,090 acres of Preliminary General Habitat (PGH).[1] Most of these acres were burned in the fire.

Other Areas of Special Concerns are the Dry Creek Bench which is a 1,616-acre Area of Critical Environmental Concern/Research Natural Area (ACEC/RNA) located on the northern edge of the Oregon Canyon Mountains. The ACEC is described in the SEORMP ROD and states, "The area has sizeable stands of mountain mahogany in relatively good condition in association with Saskatoon serviceberry. The mountain mahogany stands in this area are extensive, compared to other stands in the basin, and cover large areas within the steep drainages as well as on the small plateaus that lie at the edge of the drainages. The relevant and important values of this ACEC/RNA are the mountain mahogany/whortleleaf snowberry/Idaho fescue and mountain mahogany/big

[1]PPH and PGH data and maps have been developed through a collaborative effort between the BLM and the respective state wildlife agencies and are stored at the National Operations Center (NOC).

sagebrush/Idaho fescue Basin and Range Province vegetation cells identified by the [Oregon National Heritage Program] ONHP" (page 95).

Little Whitehorse Exclosure is a 58-acre ACEC/RNA exclosure in a narrow canyon of Little Whitehorse Creek about 30 miles northwest of McDermitt, Nevada. The ACEC is described in the SEORMP ROD and states, "The exclosure was constructed in 1972 and represents 24 [now 40] years of natural recovery for the riparian and aquatic systems that have been excluded from grazing and other impacts. The relevant and important values for ACEC/RNA are the following vegetation cells identified by the ONHP: first to third order stream, high gradient reach, in sagebrush zone, with mountain alder and redosier dogwood; riparian community dominated by mountain alder and redoiser dogwood, with potential black cottonwood and riparian community dominated by Pacific Willow and Wood's rose. Another relevant and important value associated with this ACEC/RNA is the presence of Lahontan cutthroat trout, a Federally-listed threatened species located within Little Whitehorse Creek" (page 97).

Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs): Twelve Mile Creek (3-162), Fifteen Mile Creek (3-156), and Willow Creek (3-152) are located wholly within the fire perimeter. Portions of Disaster Peak (3-153), and Oregon Canyon (3-157) also burned. These five WSAs comprise approximately 167,051 acres within the fire perimeter of the Vale District.

An additional 29,857 acres of lands within the fire perimeter of the Vale District were determined to have wilderness characteristics.

Within a week of the containment date of the fire, the Vale District assembled an interdisciplinary (ID) team of specialists and within 21 days of containment, this ID team developed an Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan (hereafter referred to as ES&R Plan) containing several treatments necessary for the stabilization and rehabilitation of the burned area within the Vale District.

The ES&R Plan was submitted for funding to the BLM's Washington Office (WO) through the Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation System (ESRS). The ES&R Plan was approved by the WO on November, 2, 2012. However, based on limited funds, no funding was granted at the time. Later, the Vale District was partially funded for the ES&R Plan to purchase seed. Native seed availability was limited and all the seed prices were higher than they had previously been earlier in the year. As a result, BLM Vale revised the ES&R Plan. This decision document will serve as the final emergency stabilization and rehabilitation plan, hereafter referred to as the Revised Plan. The final decision or revised plan will supersede the treatments identified in the ES&R Plan that was submitted through the ESRS.

In development of the ES&R Plan and the Revised Plan, BLM consulted[2] with the livestock grazing permittees, Oregon Natural Desert Association, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) , Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) , Agricultural Research Service (ARS), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW), Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), United States Geological Survey (USGS), Oregon Cattleman's Association (OCA), Vale County Court, the Trout Creek Mountain Work Group, and Western Watersheds Project (WWP). Based on BLM's

[2] The Plan was also discussed at community meetings held at Jordan Valley and Rome, Oregon and McDermitt, Nevada where opportunities to comment were provided.

field work, the consultation with agencies and interested entities, seed availability and cost, and funding limitations, the size and scope of some of the components or treatments have been adjusted from the ES&R Plan.

INTRODUCTION

Between August 5, 2012 and August 25, 2012, the Holloway Fire North burned 164,870 acres of public land administered by BLM and 5,489 acres of private land. Within that acreage, the Holloway Fire North burned: 28,089 acres of the Twelve Mile Creek WSA; 50,345 acres of the Fifteen Mile Creek WSA; 13,692 acres of the Disaster Peak WSA; 25,297 acres of the Willow Creek WSA: and 6,577 acres of the Oregon Canyon WSA; 29,857 acres of lands found to contain wilderness characteristics; 1,616 acres of the Dry Creek Bench ACEC/RNA; 58 acres of the Little Whitehorse Exclosure; 76 miles of streams occupied by the threatened Lahontan Cutthroat Trout; 164,288 PPH and 6,090 acres of PGH for the Greater Sage-Grouse. The chart below shows the amount in acres of the special designated areas that burned (see Maps 3 & 7).

Special Designated Area	Acres Burned
Twelve Mile WSA	28,089
Fifteen Mile WSA	50,345
Disaster Peak WSA	13,692
Willow Creek WSA	25,297
Oregon Canyon WSA	6,577
Dry Creek Bench ACEC/RNA	1,616
Little Whitehorse Exclosure ACEC/RNA	58
Lands with wilderness character	31,630
Lahontan Cutthroat Trout stream miles	76
Greater Sage-Grouse Preliminary Priority Habitat (PPH)	164,288
Greater Sage-Grouse Preliminary General Habitat (PGH)	6,090

The Holloway Fire North burned within the following grazing allotments: 41,767 acres (13%) of the 15 Mile Community allotment (#01201); 14,456 acres (25%) of the McCormick allotment (#01202); 31,467 acres (58%) of the Zimmerman allotment (#01203); and 72,444 acres (51%) of the Whitehorse Butte allotment (#01206) - all of which lie within the Trout Creek Geographical Management Area. The chart below shows the amount in acres of the allotments that burned (see Map 6).

ALLOT NUM	ALLOTMENT NAME	ALLOT ACRES	ACRES BURNED	ALLOTMENT % BURNED
Trout Creek Geographical Management Area				
1201	15 Mile Community	322,731	41,767	13
1202	McCormick	58,899	14,456	25
1203	Zimmerman	54,514	31,467	58
1206	Whitehorse Butte	141,549	72,444	51

COMPLIANCE

The Revised Plan was prepared under the guidance of and is consistent with the Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Handbook H-1742-1. The treatments in the Revised Plan are the same as the proposed actions described in the Vale District Normal Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan (NFESRP) Environmental Assessment (EA) # OR-030-05-005. The EA was completed in 2005. The EA analyzed the potential impacts to implementing the proposed action and alternatives and determined there would not be a significant impact to the human environment and prepared a Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) Decision Record.

Because the treatments analyzed in the NFESRP EA are the same as the Revised Plan, BLM compared the Revised Plan with the analysis found in the NFESRP EA and determined that the analysis was sufficient and new NEPA analysis was not necessary. BLM documented this review and prepared a Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) # DOI-BLM-OR-V060-2012-045 prior to the approval of the Revised Plan and the issuance of this decision. The NFESRP EA and FONSI and the DNA documents can be viewed at: http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/vale/plans/index.php. If you wish to receive hard copies of these documents, they are available upon request at the Vale District Office, (541) 473-3144.

The treatments described in the Revised Plan, as analyzed in the Vale District NFESRP EA, is consistent with the Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision, Sept. 2002. The Revised Plan's treatments have been designed to conform to the following documents, which direct and provide the framework for management of BLM lands within Vale District:

- Federal Land Policy and Management Act (43 U.S.C. 1901), 1978
- The National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4320-4347), 1970
- Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (2002)
- Taylor Grazing Act (43 U.S.C. 315), 1934
- Vale District Normal Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan (NFESRP) Environmental Assessment (EA) # OR-030-05-005.
- August 12, 1997 Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Management for Public Lands, Administered by the BLM in the States of Oregon and Washington
- 2007 Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in 17 Western States ROD
- 2010 Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in Oregon ROD
- Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush-steppe Ecosystems Management Guidelines (BLM-2000)
- National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470)
- Programmatic Agreement Among USDI BLM, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Historic Properties Managed by the BLM, Oregon State Office, Throughout the State of Oregon
- Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review
- Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species
- BLM National Sage-grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy (2004)

- Instruction Memorandum WO-2012-043, Greater Sage-Grouse Interim Management Policies and Procedures issued December 22, 2011
- A Report on National Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures, Produced by: Sage-grouse National Technical Team, December 21, 2011
- Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon: A plan to Maintain and Enhance Populations and Habitat; ODFW, April 22, 2011
- State, local, and Tribal laws, regulations, and land use plans
- SEORMP Settlement Agreement (Case 05-35931, June 10, 2010) between Vale District BLM and Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) resulting from Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision (*ONDA v. BLM*, 625 F.3d 1092 (9th Cir. 2010).
- BLM Manual 6330, Management of BLM Wilderness Study Areas, July 13, 2012
- Instruction Memorandum WO-2011-154, Requirement to Conduct and Maintain Inventory Information for Wilderness Characteristics and to Consider Lands with Wilderness Characteristics in Land Use Plans.
- Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544) , 1973

FINAL DECISION

I have determined that the vegetation, soil, and other resources on the public lands are at immediate risk of erosion and other damage due to the 2012 Holloway Fire North wildfire. This decision is effective immediately due to the soils susceptibility to accelerated erosion because of the very steep topography and recurrent high winds. The depleted vegetation cannot reasonably be expected to provide soil and watershed protection within the next two years. The burn area is extremely vulnerable to the expansion or invasion by highly competitive noxious and/or invasive annuals, biennials, and perennial weeds. There has been loss or damage to crucial habitat for wildlife and /or special status species and the burn area contains significant and fragile cultural resources that could be damaged or lost by increased soil erosion or by vandalism and looting.

DNA # DOI-BLM-OR-V060-2012-045 addressed the treatments identified in the ES&R Plan and I have determined that it was consistent with the analysis in the NFESRP EA and FONSI. The treatments listed as the Revised Plan (below) are less than the treatments proposed in the ES&R Plan and I have determined that the DNA is sufficient.

Treatments proposed in this revised plan will have "No Affect" to listed Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT) and associated critical habitat. Actions proposed in this revised plan have, in many cases, been designed to avoid potential effects to listed fish and critical habitat. If on the ground actions pose the risk of exceeding the no affect threshold, those actions will be halted and consultation with the USFWS will be initiated. Informal discussions with the USFWS have been ongoing since the Holloway fire began and the service has been involved in the development of this plan.

I have determined that implementing the Revised Plan's treatments as analyzed in the NFESRP EA did not require the preparation of an environmental impact statement, as set out in the FONSI.

I have determined that implementation of the treatments described in the Revised Plan does not constitute a major Federal action that will adversely impact the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

Based on analysis, comments from the public and input from my staff, it is my final decision to implement the treatments as listed in the Revised Plan below.

My decision is issued under 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 4190.1(a), which states:

> Notwithstanding the provisions of 43 CFR 4.21(a)(1), when BLM determines that vegetation, soil, or other resources on the public lands are at substantial risk of wildfire due to drought, fuels buildup, or other reasons, or at immediate risk of erosion or other damage due to wildfire, BLM may make a rangeland wildfire management decision effective immediately or on a date established in the decision.

REVISED PLAN TREATMENTS

Below is a table of the projects needed to stabilize and rehabilitate lands affected by Hollow Fire North. Maps of the treatment locations are also attached.

Treatments	Amount or scope	Implementation year[3]
Aerial seed mountain big sagebrush (Map 5)	24,750 acres	2013
Plant sagebrush seedlings (Map 5)	16,580 acres	2013
Plant mahogany seedlings (Map 5)	3,000 acres	2013
Plant bitterbrush seedlings (Map 5)	7,000 acres	2013
Plant willows (Map 5)	26 miles	2013
Broadcast seeding	500 acres	2013
Noxious weed inventory	15,000 acres	2013
Noxious weed treatment	2,040 acres	2013
Install new WSA signs	120 each	2013
Replace informational WSA boundary signs	340 each	2013
Protect critical heritage resources	36 each	2013
Replace directional road signs	5 each	2013
Construct temporary livestock closure fence (Map 6)	12 miles	2013
Repair Lahontan Cutthroat Trout exclosure fences (Map 6)	50 miles	2013
Repair existing fences (Map 6)	165 miles	2012
Maintain cattleguards (Map 4)	15 each	2013
Maintain reservoirs (Map 4)	48 each	2014

RATIONALE

Aerial seeding and planting seedlings of mountain big sagebrush

Mountain big sagebrush (Artemisia tridentata ssp. vaseyana) was a prominent vegetative component at the higher elevations in the Oregon Canyon and Trout Creek Mountains. This species does not resprout after fire and depends on a seed source for repopulating an area. Approximately 24,750

[3] The year in which these treatments will be implemented is subject to funding availability.

acres of public land in the burned area would be aerial seeded with mountain big sagebrush in late fall or winter. BLM will attempt to aerial seed sagebrush when snow covers the ground to enhance establishment success. Seeding areas were selected based on 1) presence of mountain big sagebrush prior to the fire, 2) potential to grow sagebrush habitat, 3) presence of PPH, and 4) areas identified by ODFW as a priority for sagebrush restoration.

Aerial seeding treatments were selected over other methods, because a large portion of this fire burned at higher elevations and is not accessible as late in the fall or as early in the spring as the lower elevations, which reduced the number of days available for ground seeding or planting seedlings.

Mountain big sagebrush is proposed to be aerially seeded at a rate of 2 lbs/acre. Sagebrush seed is scarce and expensive, so this treatment will depend on future funding and seed availability.

The priority for planting sagebrush seeds and seedlings is to restore those sites that are most likely to be used by sage-grouse. So, BLM will concentrate their efforts on PPH adjacent to leks that are known to be active. Management of the big sagebrush cover in seedings and on native rangelands to meet the life history requirements of sagebrush-dependent wildlife is consistent with and described on page 40 of the SEORMP. Managing shrub overstory for multiple-use has significant benefits for wildlife. The character of the upland vegetation influences wildlife habitat quality and productivity. This treatment is further provided for on page 50 of the SEORMP under the wildlife and wildlife habitat objectives.

WO IM No. 2012-043 instructs BLM to prioritize re-vegetation projects in ES&R plans to: (1) maintain and enhance unburned intact sagebrush habitat when at risk from adjacent threats; (2) stabilize soils; (3) reestablish hydrologic function; (4) maintain and enhance biological integrity; (5) promote plant resiliency; (6) limit expansion of dominance of invasive species; and (7) reestablish native species.

The aerial seeding and hand planting treatments are discussed under the proposed action section and are adequately analyzed in NFESRP EA. On page 8, under the section Seedbed Preparation and Seeding it states, "Hand planting riparian and upland tree and shrub seedlings would be used when it is desirable to establish specific species quickly".

The SEORMP rangeland vegetation decision objective is to: Restore, protect, and enhance the diversity and distribution of desirable vegetation communities including perennial native and desirable introduced plant species and provide for their continued existence and normal function in nutrient, water, and energy cycles (page 38 &39). It states that, "Management actions authorized or implemented by BLM will influence future vegetation composition. These actions may include…emergency fire rehabilitation."

Plant mahogany, bitterbrush and willow

The Holloway Fire North burned through large populations of mountain mahogany and antelope bitterbrush. The mountain mahogany communities provide excellent winter cover and forage for big game, as well as provide excellent hiding or escape cover and good thermal and fawning cover for mule deer. Bitterbrush is a high quality browse source for big game species and also provides cover for small mammals and birds. Inventory of the surviving populations of bitterbrush and

mountain mahogany will take place in 2013 to determine the areas for plantings in 2014. Surveys are proposed for shrub planting locations at high probability locations. It is expected that 2,100,000 bitterbrush seedlings and 122,140 curl-leaf mountain mahogany seedlings on approximately 7000 acres for bitterbrush and 3000 acres for mountain mahogany will need to be planted to rehabilitate the habitat. The proposed planting areas are on Map 5. Seedling plantings for bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*) and mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus ledifolious*) will consist of using hand tools to dig small holes to plant the seedlings. The project will also consist of the installation of protective tubes around each seedling. The planting will occur over two years. Monitoring would include photo-points and seedling survival rate inventories one to two times annually.

Treatments have been reviewed and are in conformance with the SEORMP (2002). The Rangeland Vegetation objective (Objective 1, page 38) is to Restore, protect, and enhance the diversity and distribution of desirable vegetation communities including perennial native and desirable introduced plant species. Provide for their continued existence and normal function in nutrient, water, and energy cycles. The frequency, distribution, and ecological integrity of native stands of mountain shrubs will be restored and maintained where site potential will support these species (page 39). ODFW has expressed an interest in reestablishing this habitat to provide future deer forage and wildlife habitat in the area.

Over 100 miles of perennial streams exist within the Holloway Fire North perimeter. Riparian vegetation is typically an understory of sedge and rush species with a canopy of multiple willow species and scattered aspen and dogwood. The majority of the riparian plant communities found within the fire perimeter were in healthy proper functioning condition prior to the fire. The riparian vegetation serves several functions including bank stability, energy dissipation, sediment filtration, shade, and habitat structure. There are portions of stream channels and associated riparian vegetation communities that were affected by the fire. Preliminary post-fire inventories of the streams show that some areas were unaffected or slightly affected, with enough remaining vegetation for regeneration and stream stability. The inventories did show that other areas had a much higher burn severity, resulting in a lack of regeneration of remaining species for recruitment. However, root masses still remain in these more severely burned areas and provide temporary bank stability until vegetation can reestablish. Lack of riparian vegetation can lead to susceptibility of erosion and stream degradation. Planting willow stakes in areas of high burn severity will lead to increased recovery within a shorter period of time, provide a plant source for recruitment, improve bank stability, and also provide shade—which in turn keeps water temperatures in a suitable range for the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout.

Stretches of some riparian communities burned hotter and more complete than others. In the areas that the fire burned more completely and removed the majority of the riparian vegetation, planting willow stakes collected from intact adjacent riparian areas would be beneficial by providing adapted species for recruitment, speeding up regeneration of woody species, increasing channel stabilization, enhancing watershed function, and improving stream habitat. Lack of riparian vegetation—especially deep rooted and stabilizing woody species—makes streams very susceptible to erosion and blowouts which can degrade the riparian system. In the spring/summer of FY 2013, willow regeneration monitoring on selected streams that were affected by fire would be conducted, targeting site specific areas lacking regeneration of willow species and void of recruitment species. Collection of willow stakes from adjacent riparian areas unaffected by fire would be done in the fall of 2014, followed by planting of the stakes on stretches of streams lacking regeneration due to

effects of the fire. Potential sites for collection are Oregon Canyon Creek and its associated tributaries unaffected by the fire. There are also islands of unburned riparian vegetation in areas within the perimeter of the burn that would be good sources for collecting willow stakes. All present local species of willow would be acceptable for use in the planting, with an emphasis on species such a Yellow Willow, Lemmon's Willow, and Whiplash Willow, due to their slower regeneration rate compared to Coyote Willow. Approximately 26 miles of stream (see map 5) are targeted as potential willow planting sites due to the severity of burn associated with the riparian vegetation. Willow stakes would be planted in specific areas identified in the spring of 2013 as having an absence of willow regeneration. Stakes would be planted in plots of 50-200 stakes/ half mile of stream. Monitoring for survival/success would be performed in the spring/summer of 2015.

Objective 2 for Water Resources and Riparian/Wetland Areas on page 48 of the SEORMP states: "Restore, maintain, or improve riparian vegetation, habitat diversity, and associated watershed function to achieve healthy and productive riparian areas and wetlands." Also, Objective 1 for Fish and Aquatic Habitat on page 49 states: "Restore, Maintain, or improve habitat to provide for diverse and self-sustaining communities of fishes and aquatic organisms."

Broadcast seeding

BLM evaluated the burned area to determine the suitability for seeding. However, the evaluation was limited in scope because of the number and extent of the fires that burned within the Vale District in 2012. Consequently, some areas were not as extensively surveyed as BLM would have normally conducted. The need to broaden survey efforts exists and will resume next year when access to the upper elevations is possible. Our best estimate, close to 500 acres, may need to be seeded with soil stabilization grasses because some areas burned very hot and natural regeneration will take too long to stabilize some sites. All of the areas selected for treatment will be determined based upon site visits conducted in 2013. The sites necessary for stabilization and rehabilitation may occur within any of the five WSAs which were affected by the Holloway Fire North. This treatment may also be conducted on a limited basis on lands with wilderness characteristics to stabilize cultural resources (see section titled "protect critical heritage resources"). The seeding will be done in those areas where the fire intensity was very high and little to no regeneration of the vegetation is occurring. Seeding will be done using Ultimate Terrain Vehicles (UTVs) or similar All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) to broadcast the seed and drag a harrow to cover the seed. Seeding will occur when the soils are firm and therefore the creation of ruts or compaction of the soil is unlikely. The harrow will not create permanent ruts or drill rows. Off highway vehicle (UTV or ATV) use will be limited so that new ways are not created. These actions are necessary to avoid disturbance that would require any reclamation, rehabilitation, or restoration of a WSA. Seeding will include only native species such as the fescues, needle grasses and wheatgrasses.

The SEORMP rangeland vegetation decision objective is to: "Restore, protect, and enhance the diversity and distribution of desirable vegetation communities including perennial native and desirable introduced plant species and provide for their continued existence and normal function in nutrient, water, and energy cycles" (page 38 &39). "Management actions authorized or implemented by BLM will influence future vegetation composition. These actions may include…emergency fire rehabilitation". The broadcast treatment is discussed under the proposed action section and is adequately analyzed in NFESRP EA.

Survey and treat noxious weeds

There are scattered populations of noxious weeds in the burn area and general vicinity of the fire, including Russian knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*), diffuse knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*), perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*), whitetop species (*Lepidium ssp*), Scotch thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*), bull thistle (*Circium vulgare*), Canada thistle (*Circium arvense*), and halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*). With the exception of roadsides, most of the weed populations occur from the valley floors to mid-slope of Trout Creek and Oregon Canyon mountains. From mid-slope to higher elevations and over the tops of mountains the burned area was relatively weed-free as the intact plant communities provided little opportunity for weed invasion.

Invasive species, including cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), various annual mustards, including tumble mustard (*Sisymbrium altissimum*) and clasping pepperweed (*Lepidium perfoliatum*), Russian thistle (*Salsola kali*), etc., are common throughout the lower area.

Smaller isolated weed sites have been treated along higher elevation roads, including past treatments on yellow starthistle near Steens View Reservoir in Fish Creek Seeding and Mediterranean sage near Mud Spring above Oregon Canyon ranch. Monitoring continues at these sites to assure there is no germination due to length of seed viability of these species.

In the absence of competition, the burn area would be extremely vulnerable to expansion or invasion by any of these highly competitive noxious and/or invasive annuals, biennials, and perennial weed species. Weed control within the burn area would help prevent invasive/noxious species from dominating the site.

Noxious weed inventory and treatment would help to control existing populations, help discover new populations, and reduce the risk of further establishment of noxious weeds. Initial treatments would begin in FY 2013; in FY 2014 and 2015, the noxious weeds inventory and treatment would be included as a rehabilitation treatment. Chemical treatment of noxious weed populations and closing the area to livestock would reduce the likelihood of their spread to new unoccupied areas and help to re-establish higher quality vegetation. Noxious weeds also threaten adjacent private range and agricultural lands. Furthermore, noxious weed infestations have little to no value to wildlife or livestock and are considered one of the greatest threats to loss of sage-grouse habitat.

Noxious weeds are the first plants to reestablish following a wildfire and take advantage of the vulnerability of the fire weakened and stressed desired species. The objective of the noxious weed treatment and survey is to continue treating previously known infestation sites and identify and treat new sites to halt the spread of noxious weeds in the burned area. The identified weeds are present in the burned area and if not treated, are expected to increase due to the removal of existing vegetation by the Holloway Fire North. Past treatments in the area have been relatively successful and by continuing to inventory and treat infestation and introductory sites the frequency of noxious weeds is expected to be reduced.

Noxious weed treatments would be consistent with the guidelines set forth in the ESR handbook (1742-1, pages 34–35), the SEORMP&ROD (page 41), 2002, the Vale District Integrated Weed Control Plan EA (1989), the Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program EIS 1984, and Supplement, 1987 and the Standard Operating Procedures and Mitigation Measures identified in the Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in Oregon FEIS and ROD (2010).

Pesticide Use Proposals (plans) would be prepared for weeds treatments and comply with policy (BLM Manual 9011, H-9011, and 9015).

Protect critical heritage resources
Conducting assessments of known cultural resources within the perimeter of the fire, stabilizing archaeological sites with low impact seeding and erosion control measures, and increasing law enforcement patrols near exposed archaeological resources is consistent with the SEORMP. The objective for cultural resources within the SEORMP (page 106) is to "Protect and conserve cultural and paleontological resources."

The Holloway Fire North affected known cultural resource properties that are eligible or potentially eligible for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). A Class II sample survey for archaeological resources was conducted for the BLM by INFOTEC (Pettigrew and Lebow, 1989) within the fire perimeter in the Oregon Canyon Mountain uplands in 1988. This survey resulted in the identification of lithic scatters, rockshelters, and stacked rock features.

This revised plan treatments include the assessment of known archaeological sites and documentation of fire effects. It also may include seeding of native species (see broadcast seeding discussion above) and installation of erosion control structures if necessary for stabilization purposes. The stabilization of those cultural sites deemed necessary may be located within WSAs and lands with wilderness characteristics. Increased BLM law enforcement patrols will occur to deter unauthorized collection of artifacts from significant sites. Without stabilization measures, significant cultural resources could be damaged or lost by increased erosion or by vandalism and looting.

Replacing burned facilities and maintaining cattleguards, spring developments, and reservoirs
The fire burned five directional and informational signs posted along roads and at points of interest within the Holloway Fire North. Directional and informational signs are in place to guide visitors. Roads on BLM land receive varying levels of maintenance, and these signs assist the public in making route choices that are appropriate for their vehicle and outdoor experience level. Directional and informational signage plays a significant role in the safety of public lands visitors. Without these signs, visitors could mistake a dozer line for a travel route identified on a map. All of the signs to be replaced will have the same design, dimensioning, mounting, and roadway location as they had pre-burn.

The BLM is required to maintain wilderness characteristics of WSAs so that suitability of these lands for preservation does not become impaired. A critical management tool is to inform visitors through the use of signage. Signs tell visitors they have reached a WSA boundary, are on a designated route, or that an area is closed for motor vehicle use. Within the Holloway Fire North, 340 locations have been identified that need a carsonite sign replaced. These signs will assist in ensuring public safety as well as enforcing environmental protection.

As a result of the Holloway Fire North, an increase in overland flow of water within the next two years, and therefore an increase in sediment in some of the drainages, is likely. Some of the sediment may fill cattleguards and reservoirs. These structures were installed or constructed to control livestock and to ensure conformance with grazing permits. The reservoirs and spring

developments also provide watering sources on upland locations away from Lahontan Cutthroat Trout habitat. If the reservoirs and spring developments no longer function as intended, because they are filled with sediment or are somehow damaged, they will not provide a watering source for cattle away from streams. Therefore, cattle could concentrate in riparian areas and negatively impact fish and other species associated with riparian areas.

The SEORMP Rangeland/Grazing Use objective is to: "Provide for a sustained level of livestock grazing consistent with other resource objectives and public land use allocations. Management actions listed to meet this objective include maintaining existing structural rangeland projects where beneficial to livestock and other resource values" (page 59). See the chart titled Treatments on page 6 of this document that specifies the number of rangeland developments that may need repair.

Repairing livestock management fence and exclosure fence

Approximately 165 miles of livestock management fence and 50 miles of exclosure fence were damaged by the fire. Most of these fences were constructed of steel posts and barbed wire that were not damaged by the fire. However, many of the corners, stretch panels and gate posts were constructed of wood. Many of these wooden posts burned in the fire and will be replaced. Instead of using wood, they will be replaced with steel posts or something similar, such as angle iron or rock cribs, so that they will not be damaged by any wildfires that may occur in the future.

The repair of livestock management fences is a proposed action (page 12) and adequately analyzed in the NFESRP EA. The Proposed Action, Repair/Replace Minor Facilities Essential to Public Health and Safety section, states that repair or replacement of minor facilities such as structural damage to recreational facilities, fences, gates, watering troughs, wildlife guzzlers and livestock handling facilities that were damaged by fire may be repaired under rehabilitation. On page 11 of the NFESRP EA, under the Proposed Action, Protective Fence section, it states that the success of natural recovery or re-vegetation often depends on exclusion of grazing. Also, gates, cattleguards, fences, and other control features would be repaired and /or constructed as needed to protect treatments during the recovery period.

The SEORMP Rangeland/Grazing Use objective is to: Provide for a sustained level of livestock grazing consistent with other resource objectives and public land use allocations. Management actions listed to meet this objective include maintaining existing structural rangeland projects where beneficial to livestock and other resource values (page 59).

Closing the burned area to livestock

This final decision does not close any burned areas to livestock grazing or otherwise affect the grazing privileges of any of the holders of livestock grazing permits. A separate grazing decision(s) or agreement(s) will be issued by BLM to address the exclusion of livestock as a result of the Holloway Fire North. Those grazing decisions will have a separate and different appeal process.

Temporary Fences

<u>Oregon Canyon Temporary Fence</u>

Construction of 1.0 mile of 3-strand temporary protective fence within the V pasture of the 15 Mile allotment will allow for continued grazing use by the grazing permit holders on 8925 unburned acres in that pasture. If 1.0 mile of temporary fence is not constructed it will be necessary to close the entire V pasture to livestock grazing which will deny the grazing permit holder access to

approximately 450 AUMs of permitted grazing use. The temporary fence location is practical, readily accessible, and designed to enclose the burned area with the least amount of fence possible. Building the fence in this location reduces the amount of fence necessary, reduces cost and other negative factors associated with fence construction. The fence is not located within 1.25 miles of a Greater Sage-Grouse lek. Therefore, it is not likely to be a collision risk or to negatively impact Greater Sage-Grouse. The fence location was coordinated with ODFW to minimize or eliminate potential impacts to Greater Sage-Grouse. Additional coordination may result in marking the fence to reduce collision risk even though the fence will be located greater than 1.25 miles from a known lek. This is consistent with WO IM 2012-043, Greater Sage-Grouse Interim Management Policies and Procedures (page 5). The fence will be located within both the Fifteen Mile Creek and Oregon Canyon WSAs. It will be cross the road that separates these two WSAs starting at the Whitehorse pasture fence and ending on the rim above the West Fork of Oregon Canyon. The fence will be removed when it is no longer deemed necessary, which should be less than three years. Off highway vehicles will be used where necessary to construct and remove the fence. The fence will be constructed when the soils are firm and therefore the creation of ruts or compaction of the soil is unlikely. Off highway vehicles use will be limited so that new ways are not created. These actions are necessary to avoid disturbance that would require any reclamation, rehabilitation, or restoration of a WSA. This is consistent with BLM Manual 6330-Management of BLM Wilderness Study Areas. BLM Manual 6330 allows for temporary uses or facilities that would require only passive natural restoration in order for the site to appear and function as it did prior to the disturbance (page 1-10). The NFESRP EA adequately analyzes the effects of building temporary fence within WSAs (page 44).

Blue Mountain Temporary Fence

Construction of 6.0 miles of 3-strand temporary protective fence within the Blue Mountain pasture of the 15 Mile allotment will allow for continued grazing use by the grazing permit holder on 4,958 unburned acres in that pasture. If 6.0 miles of temporary fence is not constructed, it will be necessary to close the Blue Mountain pasture to livestock grazing, which will deny the grazing permit holder access to approximately 200 AUMs of permitted grazing use. The temporary fence location is practical, readily accessible, and designed to enclose the burned area with the least amount of fence possible and has been coordinated with the livestock permittee. Building the fence in this location reduces the amount of fence necessary and reduces cost and other negative factors associated with fence construction. The fence is not located within 1.25 miles of a Greater Sage-Grouse lek. Therefore, it is not likely to be a collision risk or to negatively impact Greater Sage-Grouse. The fence location was coordinated with ODFW to minimize or eliminate potential impacts to Greater Sage-Grouse. This is consistent with WO IM 2012-043.

Red Mountain South Temporary Fence

Construction of 3.5 miles of 3-strand temporary protective fence across the Red Mountain South pasture of the Whitehorse Butte allotment will allow for continued grazing use by the grazing permit holders on 16,014 unburned acres in that pasture. If 3.5 miles of temporary fence is not constructed, it will be necessary to close the entire Red Mountain South pasture which will deny the grazing permit holder's access to approximately 644 AUMs of permitted grazing use. The temporary fence location is practical, lies adjacent to an existing road so it is readily accessible, and ties into existing fences to enclose the burned area with the least amount of fence possible. It also lies adjacent to but outside the Willow Creek WSA and outside any lands with wilderness characteristics. Building the fence in this location reduces the amount of fence necessary, reduces

cost and other negative factors associated with fence construction, and has been coordinated with the livestock grazing permittee. The fence is not located within 1.25 miles of a Greater Sage-Grouse lek. Therefore, it is not likely to be a collision risk or to negatively impact Greater Sage-Grouse. The Red Mountain South fence, like the other temporary fence treatments discussed in this Revised Plan are to improve land health, promote successful reclamation, provide resource protection, and allow the unburned portion of the pasture to be grazed. The fence location has been coordinated with ODFW to minimize or eliminate potential impacts to Greater Sage-Grouse. This is consistent with WO IM 2012-043.

Frenchie South Temporary Fence

Construction of approximately 1.5 miles of 3-strand temporary protective fence across the Frenchie South pasture of the Whitehorse Butte allotment will allow for continued grazing use by the grazing permit holder on approximately 8,590 unburned acres in that pasture. If 1.5 miles of temporary fence is not constructed, it will be necessary to close the entire Frenchie South pasture which will deny the grazing permit holder access to approximately 600 AUMs of permitted grazing use. The temporary fence location is practical, lies adjacent to an existing road so it is readily accessible, and ties into existing fences to enclose the burned area with the least amount of fence possible. It also lies adjacent to but outside any lands with wilderness characteristics. Building the fence in this location reduces the amount of fence necessary, reduces cost and other negative factors associated with fence construction, and has been coordinated with the livestock grazing permittee. The fence is not located within 1.25 miles of a Greater Sage-Grouse lek. Therefore, it is not likely to be a collision risk or negatively impact Greater Sage-Grouse. The Frenchie South fence, like the other temporary fence treatments discussed in this Revised Plan are to improve land health, promote successful reclamation, provide resource protection, and allow the unburned portion of the pasture to be grazed. The fence location has been coordinated with ODFW to minimize or eliminate potential impacts to Greater Sage-Grouse. This is consistent with WO IM 2012-043.

Temporary Fence Summary

All the temporary fences are being built to improve land health, promote successful reclamation, provide resource protection, and allow the unburned portion of the pasture to be grazed. WO IM 2012-043 instructs BLM to evaluate the need for proposed fences, especially those within 1.25 miles of leks that have been active within the past 5 years and in movement corridors between leks and roost locations and to consider deferring fence construction unless the objective is to benefit Greater Sage-Grouse habitat, improve land health, promote successful reclamation or provide resource protection. WO IM 2012-043 also instructs BLM to coordinate with ODFW to minimize or eliminate potential impacts to Greater Sage-Grouse. All the temporary fences have been discussed with ODFW and the actions necessary to eliminate or reduce hazards to Greater Sage-Grouse will be taken including constructing the fences greater than 1.25 miles from a lek. One fence will be built within a WSA. No fences will be built within lands with wilderness character or within a special designated area. All the temporary fences will be removed within three years unless it is determined that additional protection is needed beyond that timeframe to meet objectives. This is consistent with WO IM 2012-043 which states this requirement on page 4 and 5 under the Grazing Permit/Leases Issuance/Grazing management section.

The construction of temporary fence is discussed under the proposed action and is adequately analyzed in the NFESRP EA. It states that the success of natural recovery or re-vegetation often

depends on exclusion of grazing. Gates, cattleguards, fences, and other control features would also be repaired and/or constructed as needed to protect treatments during the recovery period.

Management actions listed to meet the SEORMP Rangeland/Grazing Use objective include using rangeland project development as necessary on a site-specific basis to provide maintaining resource values (page 59).

RIGHT OF APPEAL

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4 and Form 1842-1. If an appeal is filed, your notice must be filed in the Vale District Office, 100 Oregon Street, Vale, Oregon, 97918 within 30 days of receipt. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed is in error.

Filing an appeal does not by itself stay the effectiveness of a final BLM decision. If you wish to file a petition for a stay of the effectiveness of this decision, pursuant to 43 CFR 4.21, the petition for stay must accompany your notice of appeal. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

A petition for stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below.

Standards for Obtaining a Stay

Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

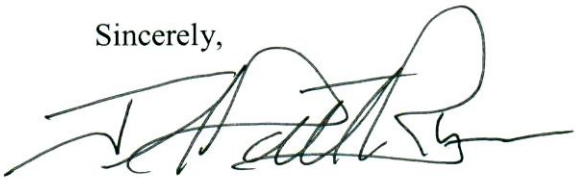
1. The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied.
2. The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits.
3. The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted.
4. Whether or not the public interest favors granting the stay.

A notice of appeal electronically transmitted (e.g. email, facsimile, or social media) will not be accepted as an appeal. Also, a petition for stay that is electronically transmitted (e.g., email, facsimile, or social media) will not be accepted as a petition for stay. Both of these documents must be received on paper at the office address above.

Persons named in the *Copies sent to:* sections of this decision are considered to be persons "named in the decision from which the appeal is taken." Thus, copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be served on these parties, in addition to any party who is named elsewhere in this decision (see 43 CFR 4.413(a) & 43 CFR 4.21(b)(3)) and the appropriate Office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR 4.413(a), (c)) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. For privacy reasons, if the decision is posted on the internet, the *Copies sent to:* section will be attached to a notification of internet availability and persons named in that section are also considered to be persons "named in the decision from which the appeal is taken."

Any person named in the decision, *Copies sent to:* section of the decision, or who received a notification of internet availability that receives a copy of a petition for a stay and/or an appeal and wishes to respond, see 43 CFR 4.21(b) for procedures to follow.

Sincerely,



Thomas Patrick "Pat" Ryan
Field Manager
Jordan/Malheur Resource Areas

CC: *Copies Sent to: see attached list*

Enclosures

Vale District
Holloway Fire
State of Oregon

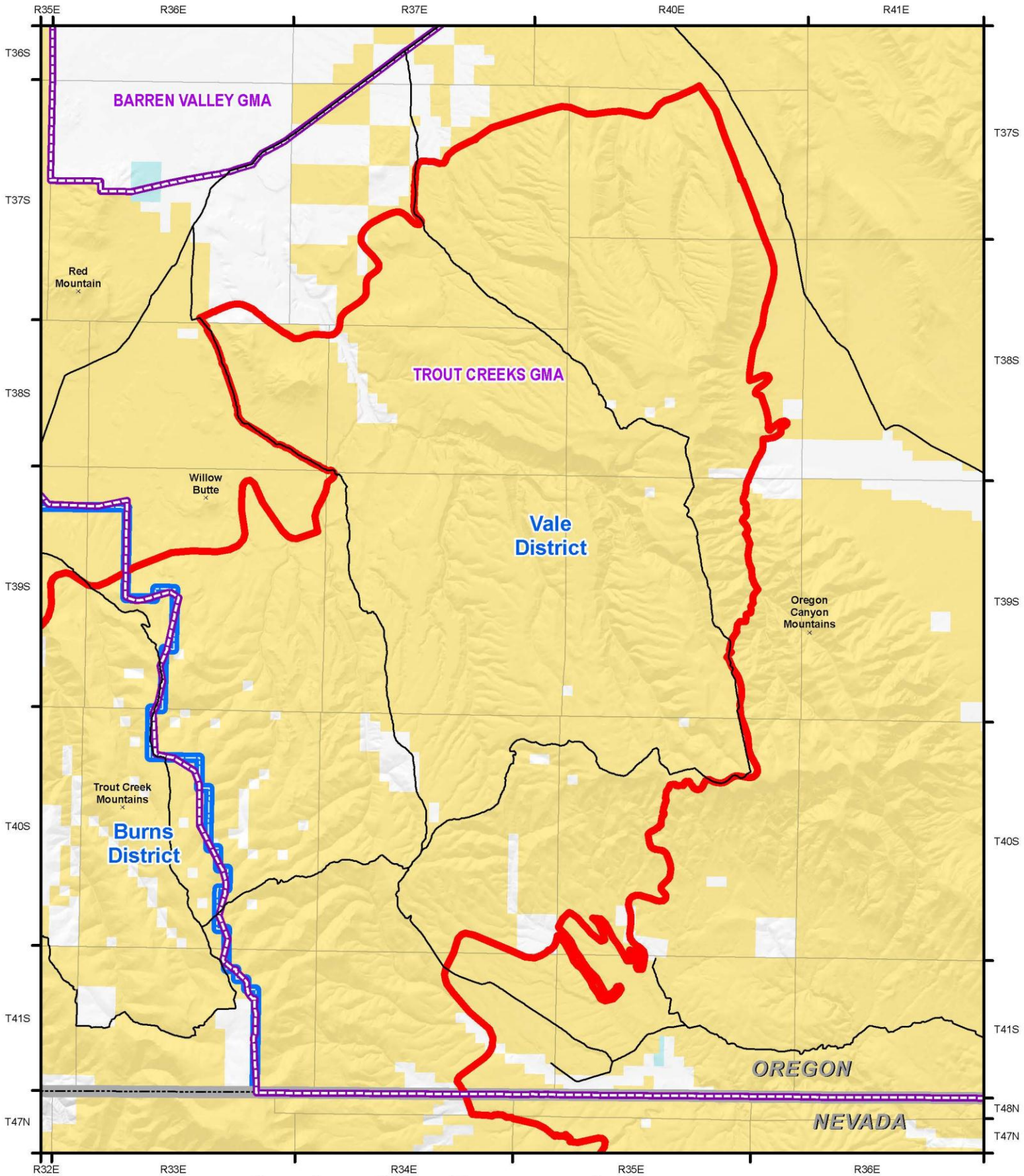
N
W E
S

0 30 60 120 Miles
0 47,000 94,000 188,000 Meters

U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Vale District
December 6, 2012

Map 1
Location
Holloway North Fire (G4ZC)
Emergency Stabilization & Rehabilitation Implementation Plan



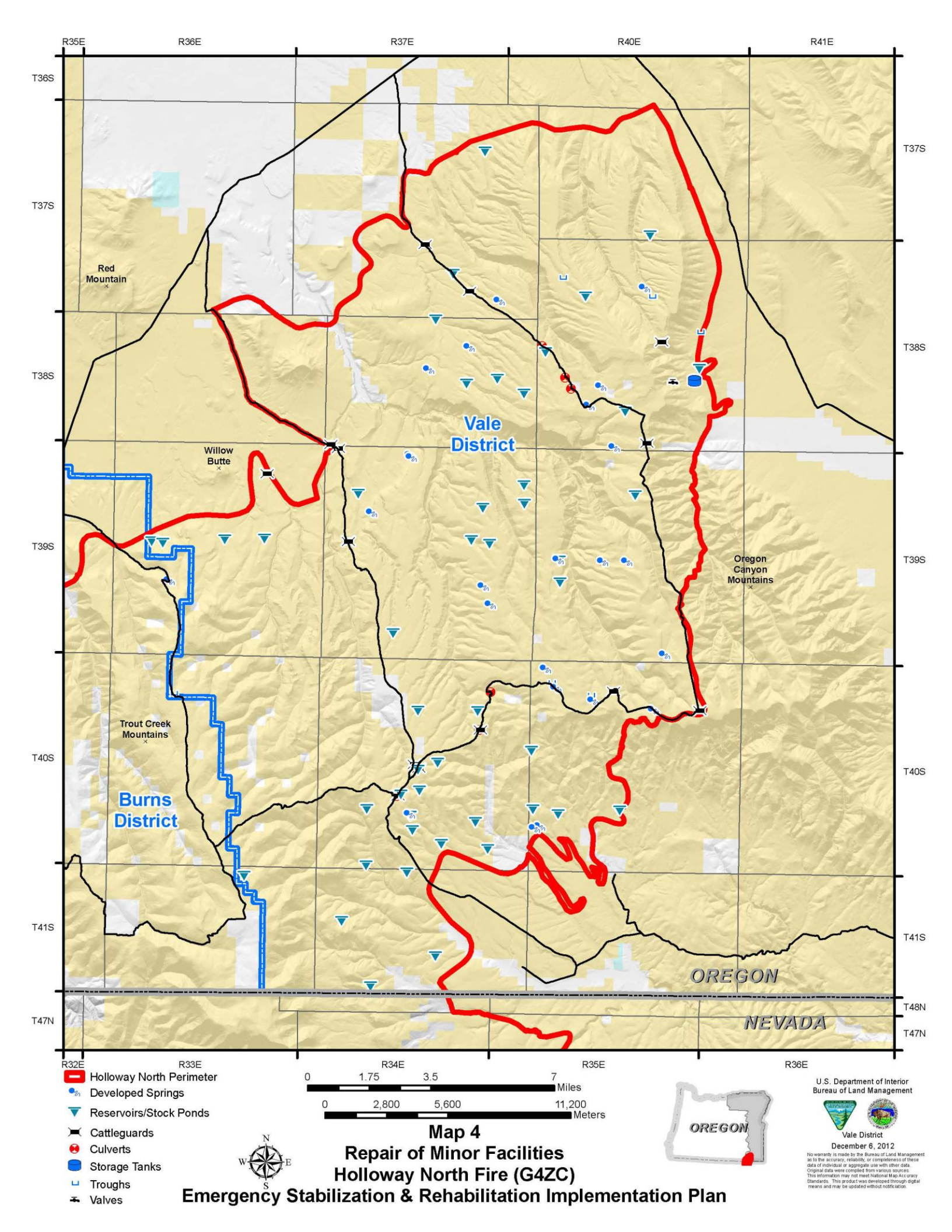
Map 2

Ownership and Geographic Management Areas

Holloway North Fire (G4ZC)

Emergency Stabilization & Rehabilitation Implementation Plan

Map 3
Special Management Areas
Holloway North Fire (G4ZC)
Emergency Stabilization & Rehabilitation Implementation Plan



Map 4
Repair of Minor Facilities
Holloway North Fire (G4ZC)
Emergency Stabilization & Rehabilitation Implementation Plan

Map 5
Ground-based and Aerial Vegetation Treatments
Holloway North Fire (G4ZC)
Emergency Stabilization & Rehabilitation Implementation Plan

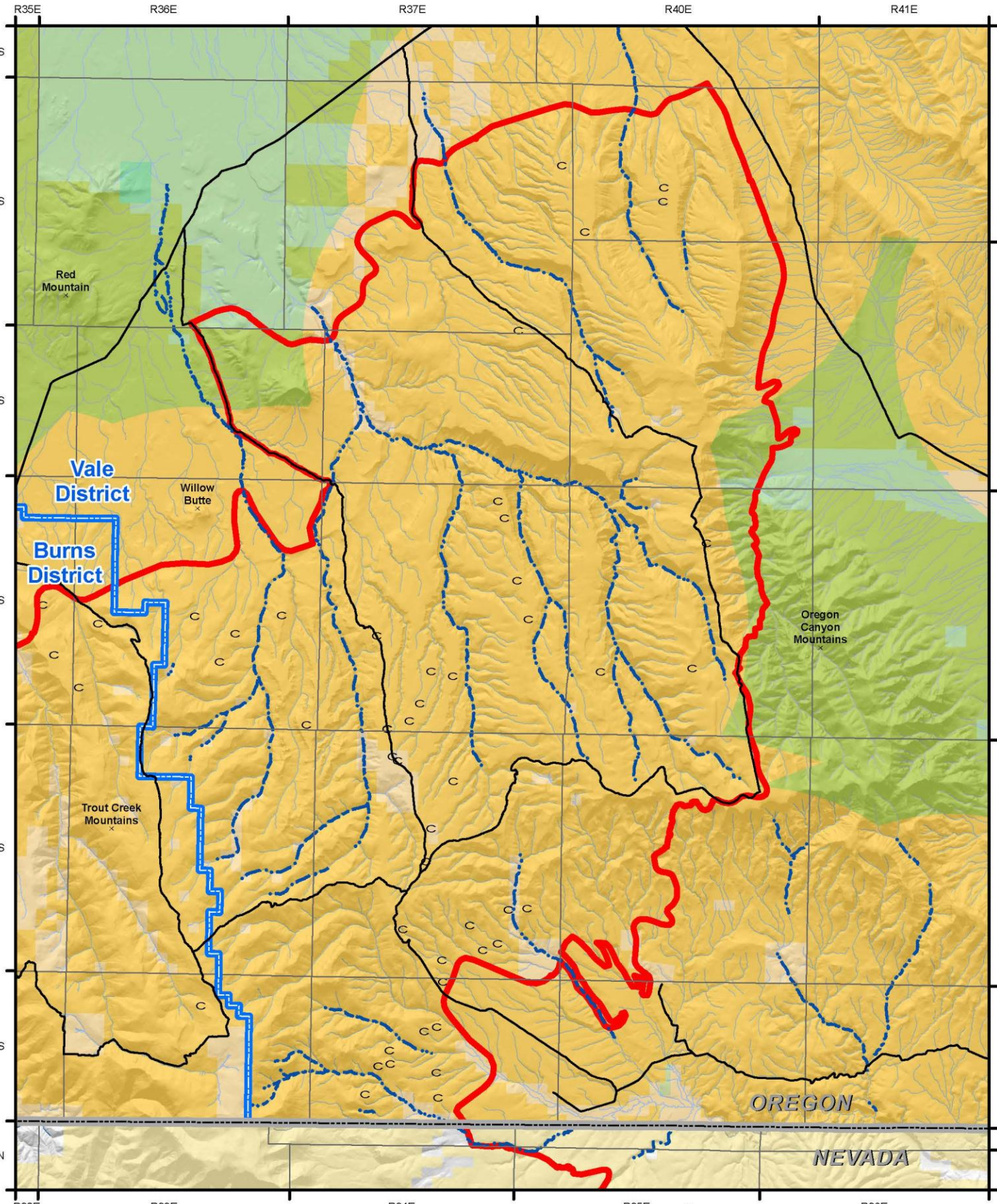
Map 6

Protective Fences/Related Facilities Repair

Holloway North Fire (G4ZC)

Emergency Stabilization & Rehabilitation Implementation Plan

MXD: P:\val\Fire\Fire2012\2012_Holloway\ESR\ESR_Final_Working_Directory\Maps\MXD\Final\Map_06_Holloway_ProtectiveFencesRelatedFacilityRepair_20130206.mxd



Holloway North Perimeter
Preliminary General Habitat
Preliminary Priority Habitat
C Sage Grouse Leks
Streams with Lahontan Cutthroat Trout

0 1.5 3 6 Miles
0 2,850 5,700 11,400 Meters

N W E S

Note: Streams shown above with Lahontan Cutthroat Trout are displayed for reference purposes only and include entire perennial stream segments found to contain LCT. Specific reaches may not have LCT populations prior to the fire.

Map 7
Greater Sage Grouse & Lahontan Cutthroat Trout
Holloway North Fire (G4ZC)
Emergency Stabilization & Rehabilitation Implementation Plan

U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Vale District
December 6, 2012